

FGDC Annual Report to OMB

Format for Agency Reports – FY 2004

Part B

LEAD AGENCY/BUREAU AND/OR SUBCOMMITTEE/WORKING GROUP
REPORT (Agencies with Lead Responsibilities Assigned under Circular A-16 in
Appendix E - <http://www.fgdc.gov/publications/a16final.html#appendix>) (Please
provide a separate report for each activity for which you have the lead)

1. Program/Activity Name:

Homeland Security Working Group

2. What are the specific federal programs these data support?

The working group's activities are to ensure that the National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI) supports the preparation for, prevention of, protection against, response to, and recovery from events and other threats to the nation's population centers and critical infrastructures. Member agencies' programs include those that employ geospatial data to enable readiness for, response to, and recovery from events, or that provide geospatial data, alone or in cooperation with other Federal and non-Federal organizations, to support readiness, response, and recovery activities.

3. Uses of Data: How do your data benefit customers and support agency missions?

Timely, accurate geographic information made seamlessly interoperable and accessible will weave together the disparate data and information necessary to accomplish the priority objectives of homeland security as stated in The National Strategy for Homeland Security:

- Prevent terrorist attacks within the United States,
- Reduce America's vulnerability to terrorism, and
- Minimize the damage from potential attacks and natural disasters.

Without the real-time ability to quickly visualize activity patterns, map locations, and understand the multi-layered geospatial context of emergency situations, homeland security will not be achieved.

4. Charter/Plan: Do you have a current charter or plan for collection? If so - please describe (include how recently the charter/plan was implemented and whether it is in need of update).

The charter was approved in May 2002. The working group will review the charter in FY05 as part of planning future activities and in recognition of the authorization of the Geospatial Management Office in the Department of Homeland Security.

5. Performance Measures: Does your agency have performance measures for your data theme? If so, please list the measures and whether you achieved your goals.

Not applicable. "Homeland security" typically is an application that makes use of data themes but is not a theme in itself. Working group projects have planned outcomes and schedules; see section 8 for status information.

6. Metadata Status: Is metadata discoverable and served through the NSDI Clearinghouse? What percentage of this theme's data has metadata and is in a Clearinghouse node?

Not applicable. "Homeland security" typically is an application that makes use of themes of data but is not a theme in itself.

7. Standards: What is the status of this theme's data, process, transfer, and classification standards?

Map symbology: Use of different map symbols for the same information slows and degrades communication, especially when many organizations need to work together; a standard would help establish a common set of symbols for features that are commonly portrayed. The working group has a subgroup developing draft standard symbology that may be taken through the ANSI INCITS/L1 process for formal approval. See section 8 for status information.

8. Progress: List FY 2004 activities/progress to date (quantify where possible).

Map symbology: Conducted a community review of point map symbols supporting emergency response applications during December 2003-January 2004. Revised the symbols based on the comments, and during July 2004 posted to the FGDC web site a revised symbol set and responses to comments. During the spring of 2004, members participated in the Open Geospatial Consortium's Emergency Mapping Symbology, Phase 1 (EMS-1) initiative that featured use of the draft symbols in an interoperability testbed for map symbology. In July 2004, the National Fire Protection Association proposed to adopt the revised symbols as part of the revision of NFPA 170, "Standards for Fire Safety Symbols." In September 2004, drafted a project proposal and standard for submitting the symbols to ANSI INCITS/L1 for adoption. The draft is under review in the working group.

"Guidelines for Providing Appropriate Access to Geospatial Data in Response to Security Concerns": Working with participants from federal, state, and local government and the library community, completed the initial "public review version" in February 2004, cleared internal FGDC and other federal reviews in April 2004, and sponsored a 30-day public review that closed during June 2004. In June, received a briefing from the Department of Justice on the relationship between safeguarding sensitive information and the Freedom of Information Act. Revised the guidelines based on the comments and during September 2004 posted to the FGDC web site a revised "interim" guideline and responses to comments. The interim version is working through the process required for

adoption by the FGDC. Provided briefings and held panel sessions at conferences and meetings on the guidelines.

9. Participation: List participating Federal agencies.

The working group has regular federal participation from the Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Defense, Energy, Homeland Security, the Interior, and Transportation; and the Environmental Protection Agency, Federal Communications Commission, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, National Capital Planning Commission, and Tennessee Valley Authority. The National States Geographic Information Council also participates on the group. Other agencies follow the working group's progress by electronic mail and participate as the agencies' needs warrant.

10. Planned Activities: What are your planned activities for FY05?

- Map symbols: Finalize the draft standard for point map symbols that support emergency response applications, submit it to ANSI INCITS/L1, and support ANSI's approval process for the standard. Identify and begin work on the next set of symbols.
- Guidelines: Manage the remaining parts of the FGDC approval process for adoption of the guidelines. Develop educational materials to encourage use of the guidelines.
- (New) Geoaddressing through the US National Grid: Encourage implementation the US National Grid for homeland security use by supporting effort to provide education and demonstrate its utility through a testbed in the Washington DC area.
- (New) Data sharing agreement: Develop "standard" geospatial data sharing agreement (or guideline for developing agreements) for homeland security purposes.
- (New) Homeland Security Infrastructure Program (HSIP) report release: Identify the parts of the HSIP report that are useful to the community and encourage their open publication.
- (New) Support homeland security channel in Geospatial One Stop: Work with channel steward to identify how Geospatial One Stop can best support homeland security needs. (Two initial needs are those for a means of quickly locating data relevant to homeland security applications and a means of posting information about homeland security projects.)
- (New) Reach out to other interagency, intergovernmental, and intersector homeland security groups and provide support to geospatial aspects of their activities.

11. Policy: Do you have a formal agency policy in place for full and open access or data sharing? Are you able to fulfill this policy and provide public access with your current agency financial resources as allocated or are you in pursuit of collaborative federal partnerships to support data access?

Not applicable. The working group reviewed agencies' formal and informal policies and instructions related to safeguarding access to geospatial data in response to security concerns as part of the development of the guidelines. The guidelines provide a procedure consisting of a sequence of decisions that an organization that originates geospatial data should make about geospatial data. The guidelines provide a method for balancing security risks and the benefits of geospatial data dissemination. If safeguarding is justified, the guidelines help organizations select appropriate risk-based safeguards that provide access to geospatial data and still protect sensitive information content.

12. Are there areas or issues regarding lead responsibilities for spatial data themes that require attention, or lessons-learned that you would like to share with others? Please describe.

The working group recognizes the following issues as relevant:

- Process for “‘fast and broad’ consensus” – Homeland security activities include a large number of public, private, and non-profit organizations whose responsibilities range from local to international in geographic scope and whose potential roles and contributions vary significantly in type and size. Achieving consensus among these different parties is a challenging task. This challenge is compounded by the urgency of the activity, which requires quick action to stay ahead of this quickly developing field. In addition, security concerns that restrict the sharing of working group information outside the group inhibit the ability of members to represent their constituents.
- Need for continual resources for standards – As a consequence of the factors described above, standards that support homeland security applications are likely to require continual support for development and implementation. In part this is a consequence of “fast and broad” consensus. This approach likely will result in a triage of action, in which standards will be achieved for those items for which consensus can be reached quickly. These items will require continual attention as homeland security needs and applications mature; meanwhile, more contentious issues will require additional attention. For items for which no single solution can be found, it will be helpful to support registries of solutions to aid the community. In addition to support for this baseline of standards and registries, resources will be needed for outreach, training, and implementation of standards and related approaches, and to ensure that the standards are kept current with maturing applications.
- Security concerns – A unique factor added by homeland security applications is the need to safeguard some information and processes. Challenges in this area include different views regarding what is sensitive and authorities for protecting information, and contradictions between the need to restrict access to information and to provide for broad participation in processes and data development and sharing.